THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) The order position of Public Sector Undertakings under the Ministry of Defence fluctuates depending upon the peaks and troughs of domestic defence acquisition. Surplus capacity, wherever available, is sought to be utilized for the civil market or exports.

(b) and (c) The Defence Procurement Procedure 2002 (version June 2003) includes a provision for the procurement of equipment through imports alongwith transfer of technology, whenever the requirement is large and spread over a long period of time.

Disposal of Vintage Planes

196. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Air Force (IAF) is ready to part with its vintage planes if there are any takers; and

(b) if so, the type of aircrafts that are put on offer?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Ajai Vikram Singh Committee Report

197. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Ajai Vikram Singh Committee Report and by when the Report is likely to be implemented; and

(b) whether it is a fact that the Finance Minister has cleared the first phase of the report, which after implementation will lower the age profiles of the Army?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The Ajai Vikram Singh Committee addresses the twin problems of reducing the age profile of field commanders and cadre stagnation.

Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the following orders pertaining to the Non-Select Ranks and restructuring of officers cadre of the Army have been issued by the Government:—

(i) Grant of substantive ranks of Captain at 2 years, Major at 6 years and Lieutenant Colonel at 13 years of service.

(ii) Grant of rank of Colonel (Time Scale) on completion of 26 years of service.

(iii) Upgradation of 750 posts of Lieutenant Colonel in a phased manner with 400 posts having been upgraded in the first year i.e. 2004 and 350 posts to be upgraded in the second year i.e. 2005.

Since the recommendations encompass a wide spectrum of service related issues, no specific time frame for implementation of the entire report can be indicated as some of the recommendations involve consultation with various government and non-government agencies.

Security threat due to proliferation of WMD through sea

198. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation through the sea is one of the main security threat to the world, particularly to India, on account of its vast coastline; and

(b) if so, what measures are taken to address such threat potential and the allocations made for the purpose during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government is prepared to meet any threat along the Indian coastline, Including threats from weapons of mass destruction that may arise from the sea.

Agreement between India and Pakistan for reduction of Armed Forces in Siachen

199. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state: